



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Monday - March 31, 2003

- ***In the West***, very warm, dry weather favors spring fieldwork in ***California*** and the ***Southwest***. Meanwhile, scattered showers are confined to the ***Pacific Northwest***. The snow-melt season is getting underway in the ***West***, where water-supply concerns persist due to the combination of mostly below-normal reservoir levels and forecasts of below-normal spring and summer runoff in most watersheds.
- ***On the Plains***, weekend cold threatened jointing winter wheat across ***southern portions of the region***. Minimum temperatures on March 29 and 30 generally ranged from 20 to 30 degrees F in ***northern Texas*** and ***western Oklahoma***. Wheat in the early stages of jointing can typically withstand temperatures as low as 20 degrees F without concern, but fully jointed wheat can be damaged by readings below 25 degrees F. Eleven percent of ***Kansas*** wheat and 53 percent of ***Oklahoma*** wheat was jointing on March 23.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, cold weather lingers across ***eastern portions of the region***. Elsewhere, warmer air is overspreading the ***western Corn Belt*** in advance of a cold front, while scattered rain and snow showers are developing across the ***upper Midwest***.
- ***In the South***, Sunday morning's low temperatures fell below 32 degrees F as far south as ***south-central Texas***, raising concerns for ***central and eastern Texas***' blooming fruit trees, including peaches. Similar concerns were noted this morning across the ***interior Southeast***, particularly in the ***northern halves of Alabama and Georgia*** and the ***western half of the Carolinas***.

Outlook: A late-season cold spell in the ***Great Lakes, Northeastern, and Mid-Atlantic States*** will be replaced by warmer weather and a chance of rain and snow showers as a warm front pushes into the region. Meanwhile, a high-pressure system will bring dry, milder weather to the ***South***. Farther north, scattered showers will linger along a weak cold front on the ***northern Plains***, while unsettled weather will persist in the ***Pacific Northwest and Great Basin***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for April 5-9 calls for above-normal precipitation in the ***Great Basin and Pacific Coast States*** and from the ***central and northern Plains eastward to the Atlantic Coast***. Meanwhile, pockets of drier-than-normal weather will prevail on the ***southern Plains***. Above-normal temperatures are forecast across the ***eastern half of the U.S.***, while cooler-than-normal weather is expected from the ***northern and central Rockies westward to the Pacific Coast***.

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